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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 4TH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 23 September 1991, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. ROGERS (Vice-President)	(Belize)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI (President)	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. AL-KHUSSAIBY (Vice-President)	(Oman)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI (President)	(Saudi Arabia)

- Address by Mr. Fernando Collor, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil

- Address by Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, President of the Republic of El Salvador

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- Opening of the general debate [9]

  Statements made by:

  Mr. Hannibalsson (Iceland)

  Mr. Konate (Burkina Faso)

  Address by Mr. James Brendan Bolger, Prime Minister of New Zealand

- Address by Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. FERNANDO COLLOR, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Mr. Fernando Collor, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Mr. Fernando Collor, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President COLLOR (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): Mr. President, may I congratulate you upon your election, which does justice to the tradition of international cooperation supported by Saudi Arabia and is an eloquent acknowledgement of your own talents.

I have great pleasure in welcoming the representatives of the new States that have now become Members of this Organization: the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The admission as Members of the two Republics that form the Korean peninsula is emblematic of an auspicious moment for world peace.

The presence in these halls of the representatives of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania, whose tenacious struggle for independence commanded universal recognition, brings a special kind of joy to the community of nations.

I also wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the balanced and dedicated manner in which he has been exercising, for some 10 years now, the highest-ranking functions of the Secretariat of our Organization.

(President Collor)

We are privileged to live at a time of universal affirmation of the rights and freedoms of the individual, of pluralism, of respect for the will of the majority, of protection of minorities, of free enterprise.

These achievements come in an age that is weary of conflict and arbitrariness. These achievements highlight an essential point, namely that collective interests always prevail, sooner or later, over the wishes of groups that cling to privilege.

Our aim is to open up a whole new historical cycle in which there should be no place for totalitarian coercion over peoples or countries, in which democracy, freedom, development and peace can be truly universal values.

(President Collor)

I address the General Assembly of the United Nations as the representative of 150 million Brazilians, as the elected leader of one of the largest democracies in the world. I come here to join in the celebration of glad tidings. I come here to share in the celebration of joy, but also to share concerns. I come here to celebrate, but also to draw attention to serious problems.

We face the challenge of reshaping the world, of building a peace that will not be the offspring of the constant threat of war. The ideological and strategic motivations for global confrontation are fortunately on the wane and exhausted. Sources of tension subsist, however, that still have to be extinguished.

The roads towards prosperity and the distribution of its fruits are known to all of us. In spite of that, parochial interests widen the gap that makes our objectives fade in the distance and that has to be bridged in our undertaking. It is as though we were simultaneously heading for common rejoicing in freedom and for separation in inequality. Liberal ideas have won. We should now labour to ensure that they will prevail in a consistent, widespread and, above all, innovative manner.

Such observations are made from the viewpoint of a country that has opted for a liberal project clearly oriented towards social concerns, for social liberalism. That is the viewpoint of a society that for 18 months now has been striving to realize those ideas.

Liberalism places the emphasis on the freedoms of the individual, which are invariably more fully exercised once the material conditions that a great majority of our citizens still lack are assured. The time has come for liberalism to take on, at the international level, the sensitivity to social problems that it has already incorporated at the domestic level.

(President Collor)

Liberalism highly values the freedom inherent in the market, but it cannot turn away from the mechanisms needed to curb distortions and prevent the non-observance of its most elementary rules, as is the case with existng discriminatory and protectionist policies.

This means that the international community will have to devote priority attention, at the political level, to development problems. This means supplementing the functioning of market mechanisms with measures intended to correct serious imbalances, the persistence of which would put good relations at risk.

Just as nobody can feel secure facing the possibility of nuclear war, nobody can consider himself to be secure and at peace in a planet where the poor and forsaken are dramatically expanding in number and in extent.

I shall not repeat here statistical data and indicators, many of which were drawn up within this Hall and which demonstrate with alarming clarity that developing countries are worse off today than they were 10 years ago.

We are approaching a global consensus on the values of democracy and we must carry through its ethical premises. Concern for the individual lies at the very heart of the democratic conscience. Through political participation and responsibility it is individuals who frame the destiny of their collectivity. It is towards individuals that the actions of democratic governments must be oriented, for the aims of such governments are only accomplished if they can ensure each and every citizen the effective means of well-being and justice.

The democratic conscience cannot but be universal in scope, since it is based on the overriding principle of equality of rights and opportunities for

(President Collor)

all. There cannot be relative democracy, under any pretext whatsoever. Thus, it is incongruous that three-quarters of mankind should live in pitiful and often inhuman situations of poverty. If political oppression affronts our democratic values, so does economic exclusion. This is all the more true as the victims of hunger and misery are often children and adolescents, so that the indignation of the present spills over into a future of hopelessness.

Last year, here in New York, the World Summit for Children revealed a broad consensus that the issue must be addressed at the highest level and with the utmost determination. It is necessary, however, that the international community give concrete shape and follow-up to that commitment.

In my country, the Government seeks to mobilize all levels of society to make children our first national priority. At the same time, various measures have been taken, such as the assignment of a special cabinet-level portfolio for children, to coordinate efforts in that area and to launch an ongoing programme to build several hundred integrated facilities, making it possible for destitute children to leave the streets and receive education, food, medical care, and cultural and sports opportunities. With the scarce resources at our disposal, we are earnestly attempting to do our best.

The international community faces three major challenges: the economic challenge of development, the political challenge of peace and the ethical challenge of ensuring a life of dignity for all. These are challenges that cannot be met separately but that must rather be faced jointly and simultaneously. These are challenges that must be met democratically, with

(President Collor)

the participation of all. These are challenges that, in the end, test our ability to elevate solidarity to the highest plane of international relations.

It is development that ensures the consolidation of democracy and represents the fundamental premise of peace. Where inequality holds sway, quarrels and confrontation are bound to take root. In a world where universality of values is increasingly pursued, little progress is being made on the path to universal patterns and paces of development.

We have a responsibility to build a truly democratic and balanced international society. In a democracy, a citizen abides by the law because he feels legitimately represented in its elaboration. The same principle should hold for norms affecting relations among States: it is participation and not coercion that provides the basic stimulus to lawful behaviour. For that reason, the General Assembly, as the world parliament, where citizens of every country are effectively represented, is the forum where we ought to work together for a better, more just, more prosperous and more peaceful world.

The definitive establishment of peace demands decision-making processes that are more open, that ensure wider participation and that are binding on States in a broader and deeper way. The natural course towards meeting the great challenges that lie at the heart of our agenda is cooperation by means of universally applicable rules genuinely agreed upon and followed by States. It is through pluralism born of tolerance, consensus born of understanding, the synthesis born of differing opinions freely expressed that the pillars of genuine cooperation can be built.

(President Collor)

The General Assembly cannot accept having its legitimate prerogatives diminished, since it symbolizes to an increasing extent the triumph of democracy the world over, which in turn opens up the prospect of victory for an international system that is also democratic.

(President Collor)

The war in the Gulf has shown us the United Nations effectively at work. We count on its ability to influence the course of events and to overcome hotbeds of tension in the international scene.

Peace in the world is contingent upon peace in the Middle East. Our friends in Lebanon are already joining together to rebuild the country on the basis of a loftier goal - a united, free, prosperous and peaceful Lebanon.

Now the time has come for the Arabs and the Israelis. The grand design of a region where all may live in peace within internationally recognized boundaries will be realized through respect for the rights of the Palestinian people and a change of attitude towards Israel.

Brazil strongly supports the initiative of convening a peace conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all interested parties, aimed at the full implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. We hope that all parties will display the necessary flexibility to remove obstacles, both physical and emotional, to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. In this context we believe that the application of labels that have exacerbated mistrust among the parties should be reconsidered.

Alongside political and economic challenges, the United Nations cannot avoid facing the ethical challenge to which I have alluded. It is necessary to design new approaches and more creative and consensual instruments for action in priority areas of the environment and development, human rights, world population questions and the situation of women and children.

In the years leading up to the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations we must set down guidelines for international relations in the twenty-first century.

(President Collor)

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will be the first among the major universal gatherings to take place in the next few years. The Conference has an inescapable obligation to future generations, inasmuch as it is they who will stand to benefit most from our work, the main objective of which is to improve the quality of life for all people.

Lasting solutions to global problems require the commitment of the international community as a whole, each country according to its responsibility relative to the origin of those problems and to their management, as well as to its economic and technological capacity to overcome them. The months leading up to the Conference will require intensive consultations. Brazil intends to explore opportunities for dialogue to the fullest and hopes to find its interlocutors to be open and determined.

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of such a Conference on Environment and Development is that it should allow for as broad a debate as possible, as profound a discussion as the political will of the participants will allow. It is with those objectives in mind, and without constraints or preconceptions, that we believe the issues of the Conference must be tackled and its crowning decisions adopted.

At the Conference we shall discuss the economic policies of developed and developing countries alike that are best suited to eradicating poverty and correcting unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. The transfer of environmentally sound technology requires an innovative approach to intellectual property rights that will allow for a regime that effectively favours access by the developing countries to the progress made by the industrialized world in that field.

(President Collor)

The Conference should not set the stage for grievances and recrimination; it should, on the contrary, provide the framework for mature and feasible proposals. In effect, it amounts to finding a proper response to the common interest of ensuring the survival of mankind and of the planet itself.

Just as the question of development has yielded to other issues on the international agenda, I am concerned that the issue of the environment may also yield to other aspects of the day-to-day life of the world.

It is understandable that the dramatic developments of the past two years have attracted considerable attention. But it should be pointed out that the political task of peace building does not take place in a vacuum. It depends on economic development, which, in turn, is dependent on environmentally sustainable economic models.

We cannot abide having an environmentally sound planet and a socially unjust world. Hence, the convergence of the political, economic and ethical dimensions on the question of the environment, which ultimately brings together the challenges of peace, development and the improvement of the quality of life of mankind as a whole. Hence, the importance of our commitment to come together at the highest level at the Rio Conference in 1992. I again invite all Heads of State and Government from all regions of the world to be present in Rio de Janeiro. Their participation will ensure that the decisions we adopt enjoy the needed political support. Brazil awaits you all with open arms.

My country is striving to ensure its rightful place on the international scene. We are aware of the fact that to that end we must rely above all on our own efforts. It is our obligation to manage our domestic affairs, to solve our problems among ourselves and to persevere on the right path.

(President Collor)

There is no other path to progress, harmony and social well-being. There is no other path to the role to which we aspire in international decision-making processes. We ask nothing of the world that we are not prepared to give. We propose nothing to the world that we are not in a position to do ourselves.

Brazil is too complex a nation to be treated according to standard prescriptions. There are no magic formulas and no economic miracles. We join the concert of nations with an open mind, with a vision of the future and with generosity, and we expect the same attitude in return.

We are perfectly aware that respectability is beholden to responsibility. In the course of our national history we have cultivated consistency and responsibility in our international relations, in conformity with the rules and principles of relations among nations. The world is witness to this tradition.

Last year I announced in this very forum my Government's decision to abstain from any nuclear explosions - including for peaceful purposes, as if it were possible to explode atomic bombs for peaceful purposes.

On 18 July 1991 in Guadalajara, Mexico, Brazil and Argentina signed the Agreement on the Exclusively Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. The Agreement has great historic significance for our countries and constitutes proof that it is possible to ensure nuclear security through nuclear cooperation.

(President Collor)

The Safeguards Agreement that Brazil and Argentina will sign with the International Atomic Energy Agency will provide all pertinent information for verification of our commitment to the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy and will also preserve the technological advances that we have arduously attained in the realm of the nuclear energy cycle.

Less than one month ago we also signed, together with Argentina and Chile, the Mendoza Commitment, on the basis of which we formally and collectively renounced all chemical and bacteriological weapons. We are aware of the example we have just set for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and we hope that a similar agreement at the global level will be finalized in the near future. It is Brazil's understanding that the aforementioned instruments afford renewed and sufficient assurances regarding the exclusively peaceful objectives of our national nuclear energy programme and regarding our repudiation of weapons of mass destruction.

International flows of sensitive technology goods, services and know-how are today a vital issue. We should look for formulas that would serve to reconcile two basic interests: avoiding the possibility that such technologies are used in weapons of mass destruction; and ensuring that access to such technologies remains open. This is an essential prerequisite for building and modernizing the technological capacity of countries like Brazil.

It is easy to welcome change and to exult in the prospects for building a new world. It is painful, however, to speak of the many obstacles that still stand in the way of hope. Among these obstacles we find the acute problem of external indebtedness that drains the developing countries of scarce capital, arbitrary constraints on the transfer of technology and disregard for market

(President Collor)

principles under the protectionist policies pursued, first and foremost, by the industrialized countries.

The paths leading to an international framework that ensures peace and fosters development are complex and have yet to be defined. There is consensus on the objectives and perhaps on the means, but resistance to real change remains enormous. The great strides that have been made in the ideological and strategic realms must be matched by no less courageous strides towards building confidence and cooperation.

In the political sphere, democracy should open up the way for new decision-making procedures in the international field. Security must be an effectively collective endeavour, enforced by law and not by the spectre of arms.

If in the economic sphere we have shed the facile and simplistic dreams of radical reform of the international economy, and if we know that great transformations begin with hard work aimed at internal reform, we cannot all the same forgo realistic and sensible proposals for international cooperation. We are committed to fighting for the success of the Uruguay Round in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), as we believe that the philosophy of free and open trade should rest on a solid and balanced foundation.

In the realm of values, there is a consensus that our first duty is to struggle for the full exercise of human rights on the political, economic and social levels. That is the great objective that international solidarity should attain.

Brazil is pursuing no other policy than to warn, to caution, to propose and, above all, to collaborate. The growing imbalance between developed and

(President Collor)

developing countries poses a tangible threat to international stability and security. This threat will only increase if there is no effective support for the consolidation of democracy and development. There is a need to create, at the world level, a sturdily built, consensual programme of action, organized around the question of development, to guide and spur negotiations on specific items pertaining to relations among nations at all stages of economic progress.

On the American continent, the Enterprise for the Americas initiative, currently known as the Bush Plan, is a first indication of willingness to reach understanding. Along the lines of this same drive towards the actual integration of the continent, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay have signed the Treaty for the Constitution of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUL), which already dovetails with the Enterprise for the Americas through the Rose Garden Agreement, signed in Washington earlier this year.

In order to realize the hopes thus raised among the peoples of the region, both initiatives must incorporate as a priority goal the search for a solution to the serious social problems that still confront us. This political, economic and ethical imperative cannot be regarded as constituting a claim by any particular country or group of countries. It is an ensign to be flown by all States, by all governments.

We are drawing nigh to the universal and ultimate triumph of the revolution of democracy and freedom. What remains is to carry it through with the revolution of social justice and solidarity. May God be with us.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Fernando Collor, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY MR. ALFREDO FELIX CRISTIANI BURKARD, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of El Salvador, His Excellency Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President CRISTIANI BURKARD (interpretation from Spanish): May we first of all say how extremely pleased we are, Sir, at seeing you elected to the presidency of this Assembly in order to direct the work of its forty-sixth regular session. Your great skill, recognized experience and effective leadership all augur well for this gathering of reflection and decision-making at the highest universal level. Our pleasure at your election is accompanied by our appreciation of the outstanding work accomplished by your predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, and we would like to emphasize that this range of merits and accomplishments represents the continuation of the major and fruitful developments so characteristic of this forum in which the international community gathers to deal with the most important questions of today's world.

We wish also to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his positive work at the head of the Organization which this year has gained still greater stature, given the scope that the international political situation now allows for the fundamental work of the United Nations. Confidence in multilateralism has increased considerably, strengthening the credibility and capacity for action of the

(President Cristiani Burkard)

United Nations and opening up new fields in which it is can help resolve specific problems. In the case of El Salvador, the United Nations, through the Secretary-General, has been engaged in long-term constructive work reflected in the United Nations mission for the verification of the agreements arising out of the negotiation process now under way. This task, of an unprecedented magnitude and responsibility, is only one demonstration of the swift and basically unique changes taking place throughout the world.

The Assembly is initiating its work at a high-water mark in the history of mankind. We are seeing and feeling with unusual closeness the movement of historical mechanisms not as the abstract expression of the dynamics of our times, but rather as the fascinating pulse of history itself at its deepest levels of reasoning. The virtual disappearance of all totalitarian dogma, which just yesterday seemed so solid, evokes the ancient theme of the power of freedom, not as a theory but as a fact.

I need not dwell on the differences of development and material power between regions and States. But it is appropriate to point out that for the greater part of this century the development of an incredible system of intimidation in the world order has seemed to replace the very energy of man as a free being and a protagonist of history. What we are now seeing is the re-emergence of that spiritual and moral energy which prevails over even the most sophisticated machinery of destruction. Power is once again being centred on the freedom of the human being. This is in itself the beginning of a refashioned world and of an inevitable rapprochement between regions and peoples. For freedom has similar problems both within the great Powers and in the small countries of the so-called third world, a category that is now obsolete, since the terminology of the "cold war" has been overtaken by events.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

We Salvadorians have been the scapegoats of that abusive and irrational polarity that divided the world into inevitable factions on the basis of an artificial ideological fanaticism. The Salvadorian war was not invented by any one but arose as a manifestation of grave shortcomings and errors within our society; but once unleashed, it took on the shadings of the global conflict and received inputs that prolonged the war until the present. As we see it, then, the end of the "cold war" is not just good news for everyone but rather a particularly encouraging augury for our own domestic situation and for opportunities for genuine and effective peacemaking.

This is the reason we are here, raising our voice in what is really the first General Assembly held against an international background in which the bitter East-West conflict has virtually ceased to exist. The recent events in the Soviet Union, which are an expression of the universal vitality of the democratic movement, give grounds for hoping that we are rapidly moving towards a new era of realistic cooperation and reasonable understanding among nations based on pragmatism and free of the false simplifications of one-sided ideologies.

We want to emphasize that experience teaches us that only a tolerant and open-minded pragmatism can resolve problems and confront reality. This is what we are promoting in El Salvador, which is emerging from the destructive turbulence of war and is moving towards a post-war period that will be difficult but that must be marked by national reconciliation. At the economic level, pragmatism has taught us the need to promote a programme of adjustment and recovery that can prepare us for productivity and competition. In our search for peace, pragmatism tells us that we must discard any thought of military solutions and continue, as we have been doing, our effort to achieve political solutions. In the international sphere, pragmatism teaches us that

(President Cristiani Burkard)

integration and cooperation are the only ways to join the great movement towards development. Of course, the pragmatism we advocate does not mean forgetting or setting aside principles. Quite the contrary. As we see it, the greatest pragmatism is called democracy and we are unswerving and fervent advocates of democracy as a system of government and as a way of life.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

This is the third time I have ascended this rostrum since taking office as President of El Salvador on 1 June 1989. Each time, we have come to speak of peace, coming together and reconciliation among Salvadorans following over a decade of fratricidal war. Early in our Administration, some doubted our intentions; we preferred not to respond to those doubts but rather to wait until time could speak for us. Two years later, the process of peacemaking and democratization in El Salvador has made persevering and significant progress. We present those results not as a personal achievement but as the product of efforts by all Salvadorans, who are deeply tired of war and who want at last to find the path of peace. From this international forum I pay a tribute of admiration and gratitude to those millions of Salvadorans who through adversity and stoicism have taught us that is possible to hope for a better future.

We Salvadorans are not alone in those aspirations and efforts. Fortunately, our struggle for freedom and the building of our democracy coincides with a broad, vigorous movement, in Central America and throughout the world, in the same direction.

In Central America - which the sister republic of Panama has now joined as a full-fledged member - the work of economic, social and political integration is progressing with encouraging dynamism. In our region there is a great awareness of unity, as has been recognized by the Central American Presidents, who at their tenth summit meeting, held recently in San Salvador, recognized that

"the world changes and transformations of recent years place Central America at a point in history that requires a renewed vision of its own process of integration and of involvement in a world order characterized

(President Cristiani Burkard)

by interdependence, the emergence of new forms of integration and cooperation and the effective application of international law."

As for Latin America, the Guadalajara summit, which had an Ibero-American scope, was another unprecedented event with major implications for the future. The Mexico meeting, which demonstrated the extraordinary leadership of that fraternal country, was unanimously welcomed and ended with a declaration whose importance can be gauged from a reading of the first paragraph alone:

"It is with special pleasure that we have met, for the first time in history, to examine together the great challenges facing our countries in a changing world. We therefore propose to pool the political will of our Governments to promote the solutions demanded by these challenges and to transform the historical and cultural affinities that bind us into an instrument of unity and development based on dialogue, cooperation and solidarity."

I want to underscore those three words - dialogue, cooperation and solidarity - as the keys to a new era characterized by coexistence within States as well as by the dynamics of international relations. The era of arrogance and abuse is becoming a thing of the past, leaving untold death and trauma in its wake. Intolerance and fear attempted to take over the human spirit during our century - which is also the century of technological marvels. It was time for science and the modes of human coexistence to leap into the future by regaining the freedom to create and to believe in a world worthy of mankind and of the great endeavour of freedom.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

In the political sphere, walls are crumbling, myths collapsing and freedom advancing with amazing vitality. But the challenge does not stop there. Social development is too fragile for us to rest quietly. We believe that, in order to be solid and lasting, democracy must encompass the political, social, economic and cultural spheres. We must not forget -- perhaps because the devastating experience of war makes for lucid realism - that the centre of the process is man, with his needs, rights and aspirations. It is man that in many parts of the world still suffers the scourges of extreme poverty, social marginalization, discrimination, uncertainty and ignorance, among other evils. That is a challenge to the universal conscience. For that reason we favour convening a world summit for social development, which could take this problem to a truly global level of consideration.

A new international order is emerging, which is of vast importance to our Organization. The United Nations is gaining new areas of activity in a world that demands ever greater multilateral communication. We must give new vitality to the principles of universality and efficiency, for today the work of the Organization is becoming increasingly broad and complex. Speaking of universality, we are pleased to welcome the admission of seven new Members to the United Nations family. In some cases, such as those of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, this admission is dramatic, moving and encouraging. But in all cases, we convey to the representatives of the seven new Members of the Organization our warmest welcome in the certainty that their contribution to the work of the United Nations will be excellent and a source of strength.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

Our presence at United Nations Headquarters has special significance on this occasion. For a week before this address to the General Assembly we have been working intensively with the Secretary-General to find a way to accelerate the solution to the Salvadoran conflict. We are completely convinced that the time has come for war to come to an end in El Salvador. Both the Salvadoran people and the international community are rightly impatient for peace to begin its constructive course in our country. We have been working unceasingly and tirelessly to achieve that goal, which is now very close at hand. In this endeavour with the Secretary-General we have achieved important progress towards ensuring that 1991 will be the year of peace. The main roadblocks have been removed, and only the final details remain to be resolved.

This is enormously encouraging news for the Salvadoran people, and we want to share it with the other nations of the world, many of which have followed very closely the process on which we Salvadorans have embarked. El Salvador has gained the world's attention because of war, but now we deserve and demand the world's attention in favour of the peace we are approaching through democracy. We ask the international community for all necessary support for Salvadoran democracy, so that our country can continue to progress, with freedom and justice, towards stability and progress.

Given the level and importance of the results achieved at the New York meeting between the Government and the FMLN, with the direct assistance of the Secretary-General, we consider that total agreement on an end to the conflict could be a reality in the very near future. A rapid de-escalation of armed confrontation and an end to all forms of violence affecting the civilian population are goals to which we shall give immediate, special attention. We

(President Cristiani Burkard)

want the Salvadoran people to enjoy the tranquillity and security it deserves, and we shall examine and propose ways to achieve that sincerely, genuinely and as quickly as possible.

As always, we request the international community's confidence and support for our efforts, and we ask God to enlighten all of us who believe in peace and who are working humbly and steadfastly to achieve it.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of El Salvador for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Before calling on the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to remind members of the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 20 September, that congratulations should not be expressed in the General Assembly after a statement has been delivered.

In this connection, may I also remind members of another decision taken by the Assembly at the same meeting, that speakers in the general debate, after delivering their statements, would leave the Assembly Hall through Room GA-200 at the rear of the podium before returning to their seats.

I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with a decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers will be closed on Wednesday, 25 September 1991, at 6 p.m. May I request delegations to be good enough to provide estimated speaking times that are as accurate as possible so that we may be able to plan our meetings in an orderly way.

Mr. HANNIBALSSON (Iceland): Mr. President, let me begin by expressing my congratulations on your election to our highest office. I wish you every success and pledge the sincere support of my delegation.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to welcome the Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands as new Members of the United Nations.

I am also delighted to be able to welcome the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as new Members of our world Organization. After having suffered half a century of military occupation and enforced annexation, the present status of the Baltic States as fully recognized

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

members of the world community is more than timely. Relations between Iceland and these European neighbours have intensified over the past few years and we look forward to increased cooperation with their Governments in this and other multilateral forums.

It is only a natural reflection of the current times that our attention and thoughts dwell upon the process of change in our immediate political environment and upon the challenges ahead. Seldom if ever has history recorded such a radical and rapid transformation of international politics and inter-State relations as we have recently witnessed in Europe. Rarely have global tasks and the need for collective effort been so formidable.

Great change entails both opportunities and risks. The opportunities inherent in the transformation of Central and Eastern Europe have, in fact, ended the cold war.

Events in Europe have progressed to such an extent that we have reason to believe that the advance of democracy will not be reversed. The failed coup in the Soviet Union last month demonstrated the tenacity of democratic aspirations. Political and military intimidation was successfully resisted by the people of Russia and their democratically elected President Boris Yeltsin: a courageous leader who rose to the occasion. Our hopes were reinforced that tanks and concrete walls would no longer be a determining factor in European politics. Instead, the principles of democracy, self-determination and the rule of law would prevail.

Yet, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that the process of democratization and economic reform in Central and Eastern Europe is still fraught with danger arising from a number of factors; particularly the paralysing economic problems and ethnic conflicts. The extreme vulnerability

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of the new democracies is evident to all. They have to contend with political and social unrest stemming from economic difficulties, ethnic conflict and, in some cases, extreme nationalism.

President Vaclav Havel of the Czech and Slovak Republic has pointed out that the democratization of Central and Eastern Europe and their transition to market economies are "affected by more impediments than was originally expected and that the unholy legacy these countries have to deal with goes deeper and has wider ramifications than anyone could imagine".

History records numerable instances of the interconnection between war and major change. The decline and fall of empires have frequently resulted in bloodshed. We need to be mindful of the risks posed by change.

The situation in Yugoslavia is indicative of these risks. It also serves as a reminder that ethnic conflicts can no longer be regarded as the sole responsibility of individual States. Such conflicts can have wider implications and could constitute a threat to international peace and security.

In Yugoslavia the fundamental lesson of the transformation in Europe has obviously not been understood. A political order based on coercion and oppression cannot be upheld contrary to the will of the people. The simple fact is that if the peoples of Yuglsavia are not willing to hold the country together, it will not stay together. The international community may have to accept this fact and heed the call for recognition of Croatia and Slovenia.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

Future stability and security on the European continent depend on the continued success of the democratic process, as well as on the alleviation of economic and ethnic problems. The task is complex and its order of magnitude is profound. It will require great efforts by the peoples of central and eastern Europe. However, external political, economic and technological assistance will also be essential. We will no longer protect our own interests through passivity or inaction: to hesitate at this juncture would be self-defeating. Communism in central and eastern Europe belongs to the past. Whatever remains of this ideology will wither away sooner rather than later.

The present situation is reminiscent of the years after the Second World War. The discouraging task of building from the ruins of war had a certain similarity to the need for reconstruction in central and eastern Europe following years of oppression and economic centralization: there was the same mood of despondency and frustration. Post-war reconstruction was successful because of that unique endeavour in the history of international relations, the Marshall Plan - a rare act of statesmanship. This magnanimous deed provided exhausted European economies with the resources needed for self-reliance. The psychological support provided to the peoples of Europe was equally valuable. The countries of central and eastern Europe are in need of both now: a new Marshall Plan is called for.

I do not mean to imply that recent developments in Europe should be predominant in our deliberations to the exclusion of all other concerns. Never the less, we cannot ignore the positive global implications of a reduced danger of catastrophic war. Only if Europe remains stable and peaceful can the resources absorbed by the cold war be recouped. This will be the

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principal prerequisite for more concerted action in international affars. The satisfactory conclusion of the cold war enabled the United Nations to react swiftly and decisively to the brutal Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The imperative need for an effective global and collective security system became painfully apparent during the Second World War. Subsequently, our world Organization was established. During the intervening five decades, our perception of security has widened and our awareness of the various interdependencies has deepened. As important as the defence dimension of security may be, there are also political, economic, social and, increasingly, ecological aspects of the concept. Security and peace cannot be achieved, or sustained in the long term, without human rights, economic development and environmental stability.

A global and collective security system, if it is to be applied efficiently to dealing with serious threats to our common environment, will succeed only through increased international cooperation. We must seize the opportunity presented by the prevailing international political climate and focus our attention and energy on constructing a global and collective security system. In doing so, we can finally realize the world order of international law and cooperation envisaged by the authors of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Nordic countries have already initiated the formulation of their common approach to this opportunity. Eventually, all the Members of this Organization will have to agree on an appropriate channel for our deliberations and decisions. A group led by the former Chancellor of Germany, Willy Brandt, has laid significant groundwork by forwarding suggestions and proposals on organizational reforms in the United Nations. The Government of

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

Iceland supports the group's proposal for the establishment of an independent international commission on global governance to prepare for a world summit to respond to this challenge.

The present opportunity to revitalize the United Nations is a true peace dividend. One way to seize this opportunity would be to act quickly to solidify measures taken under the auspices of this Organization to establish a stable world order of the oceans. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was signed in Jamaica nine years ago. One hundred and fifty-nine States signed the Convention and thereby expressed their agreement with its objectives and purposes. Forty-nine States have ratified or acceded to the Convention; it can now be foreseen that the Convention may enter into force within the next two years.

Iceland has ratified the Convention; we believe that its provisions constitute a broadly acceptable regime for the rational exploitation of the world's marine resources. It has established rules for a wide range of uses for the seas, thereby reducing the potential for conflict between interested States. I might add that, in the field of environmental protection, the Brundtland Commission concluded that the most significant initial action that States could take in the interests of the oceans' threatened life-support system was to ratify the Convention.

We are of course aware that a number of industrialized countries remain concerned about the rules in the Convention on the exploitation of the deep seabed. We must here act quickly to preserve the bonds that were forged between developing nations and the industrialized world at the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. It is our submission that some of the difficulties may have related to differences in ideology in the past, but

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these differences are fast disappearing from the international scene.

The Government of Iceland is encouraged by efforts under way to ensure that the Convention will be implemented in a viable manner. We applaud the initiative of the Secretary-General, and call on all States to support these efforts, which would be to the benefit of the entire international community.

Next year, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will convene in Rio de Janeiro. The Government of Iceland has high expectations for the outcome of the Conference, which is dedicated to our common future.

International cooperation in environmental matters must be based on the right of all human beings to a safe environment. We must all of us accept the obligation to conserve natural resources and maintain biological diversity, and the affluent amongst us should not turn a blind eye to the justified need of humankind for natural resources to be utilized on the basis of the principle of optimum sustainable yield. These principles should be incorporated into a concise legal instrument, drawing from the experience of formulating the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Government of Iceland is distressed to note that attempts have been made to introduce into the Rio process proposals on the management of whales. These proposals place the emphasis on ambiguous ethical considerations, and thus raise a false environmental issue and run counter to the principle of sustainable development. This problem is compounded when States consider introducing trade restrictions in response to differences in environmental policies.

The Government of Iceland feels that the Rio Conference should lay down a substantive action plan addressing all major areas affecting the relationship

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between the environment and the economy. In particular, there must be immediate action to restrict and monitor all dumping and discharges of radioactive materials, heavy metals and persistent organic substances in the oceans or in sub-seabed repositories. We are particularly concerned about the persistent danger of radioactive contamination of the oceans: the threat emanates from various sources, not least from nuclear installations bordering on ocean areas. It is simply not acceptable that States should plan hazardous facilities in circumstances where the slightest accident could have calamitous effects on neighbouring States.

The risk also emanates from nuclear reactors at sea. The Government of Iceland will continue to work for international recognition of the potential dangers posed by accidents involving sea-borne nuclear reactors. Inevitably, environmental factors play a major role in Iceland's policy on naval arms control and confidence-building.

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Furthermore, the Government of Iceland believes that the international management and conservation of the living resources of the high seas deserves greater attention from the world community. In the words of the Declaration for a New Global Agenda:

"The goal of the cold war was to get others to change their values and behaviour, but winning the battle to save the planet depends on changing our own values and behaviour."

That is the message of "Vinland Revisited", a joint Norwegian-Icelandic venture, meant not only to commemorate the bringing together of Europe and America a thousand years ago, but, more important, to look ahead and ask ourselves how the spirit of discovery in modern times could be aimed at shaping mankind's common future on our planet. Let us remember that we have no more new continents to exploit or expand to. We have no choice but to accept our common obligation to preserve our natural habitat, the only planet that we have.

The interaction between the state of the environment and the progress of development is increasingly clear. We can considerably boost support for development, while contributing to global environmental protection, through increased international economic cooperation.

During the past decade the economic situation in the majority of developing countries has deteriorated. The protectionism of some of the industrialized countries is undeniably one of the primary reasons for this trend. In fact, developing countries suffer more through protectionism than they gain through development assistance. Consequently, the industrialized countries could make a major contribution to development by liberalizing trade and opening up their markets to the products of the developing countries.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

As a country overwhelmingly dependent on one natural resource and export commodity, Iceland well understands the situation faced by many developing countries. Indeed, very few countries are as dependent on foreign trade as my country. The problems caused by protectionism are in fact not confined to relations between industrialized countries and developing countries; they also emerge in relations between the industrialized countries themselves. As a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Iceland has been actively involved in negotiations with its European neighbours and has often come up against the same type of short-sighted policies as have prevented access by developing countries to the markets of Europe. The policy of the European Communities of linking trade and access to resources is totally inappropriate and unacceptable. It is a stumbling block in the path of further European integration.

Efforts to invigorate the economies of the countries of central and eastern Europe are an additional incentive for liberalized trade, as they may absorb resources otherwise available to programmes for the assistance of developing countries. We are unlikely to find better means to rectify this situation than by liberalizing trade policies. This need not be a prolonged process. We have already reached the final stages of the Uruguay Round of negotiations within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. These negotiations are of paramount importance for the future stability of the international community. We must now exercise the political will to lead them to a successful conclusion.

In my opening remarks I referred to the historic transformation of central and eastern Europe. I believe it is not over-Eurocentric to state that recent events in Europe have been of global political and economic

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importance. But, more than this, they demonstrate to the whole world that the human spirit is indomitable. The triumph of democracy, which in itself entails respect for human rights, constitutes a clear message to the oppressed everywhere: that theirs is not a hopeless cause, since even the mightiest totalitarian means of oppression did not suffice in the end to quell, subdue or restrain dissent or opposition. Or, in the words of that great, stubborn humanist, President Landsbergis of Lithuania, "The independence and inherent dignity of the human spirit shall prevail".

Mr. KONATE (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): You have the delicate task, Mr. President, of presiding over the Assembly's work at a particularly sensitive time in the history of international relations. We assure you of our delegation's support; we know that we may have full confidence in you in view of your diplomatic talents and your experience. Your country and mine enjoy particularly good relations in a variety of fields, a clear sign of solid friendship and shared interests.

I should also like, Sir, to express our great satisfaction with the work of your predecessor, Mr. Guido De Marco, in his conduct of the proceedings of the forty-fifth session.

We greet and welcome all those States that have just joined the community of the United Nations: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Lithuania.

I also wish to express our whole-hearted appreciation of the Secretary-General's role at the head of our Organization. His patient and calm determination has given the United Nations a solid basis and enhanced its credibility.

(Mr. Konate, Burkina Faso)

Burkina Faso, with a population of a little more than 9 million and covering 274,000 square kilometres of land-locked territory, desires an equal voice with others in the concert of nations in raising questions and making proposals.

The past 24 months have changed the international scene. Everywhere we hear appeals for cooperation and praise for the rapid change through which we are living. We are told that we are no longer in an era of outspoken demands. Rather, it is a time of conciliation and dialogue, because the forces at work seek not confrontation but the establishment of a new world order based on respect for human rights. That, briefly, is the background to our work.

However, the after-effects and consequences of the East-West rivalry as well as its internal dynamics, for good or ill, continue to affect various regions of the world.

We are also witnessing the phenomena of fusion and fission. While we talk about regrouping, about the formation of large groups, we see some large groups breaking up. At a time when we extend recognition, on the emergence of new sovereignties, we hear talk of a duty to intervene.

All these ideas are jostling with each other, without any focus on their future. It is natural in any period of major change to see the overturning of ideas and realities and the multiplication of the contradictions inherent in the sudden speeding up of history.

(Mr. Konate, Burkina Faso)

Transitions - fraught as they are with those elements - are producing a balance of forces which is shaping the future. The question which arises is to what extent will the vast majority of mankind benefit from this evolution?

Distressing events and upheavals are convulsing southern Africa. The apartheid of the Pretoria regime continues to jeopardize the economic health and stability of the front-line States. A particularly heavy price is being paid by Mozambique. RENAMO continues its grim work of sabotage and destruction; and it is impeding the talks which have begun. Burkina Faso recognizes the merit of the Mozambican authorities in continuing on the path of a negotiated settlement and a resumption of the negotiations and we wish to express our feelings of encouragement and solidarity to the people of Mozambique.

In Angola, the Alvor Agreements, with the cooperation of all countries, both inside and outside the subregion, must quite clearly improve the situation and promote peace.

In South Africa, we must welcome the abolition by Mr. de Klerk of the legislative pillars of apartheid. However, one of the bases of apartheid remains, namely its current Constitution. Also, we must deplore the manoeuvres of the Pretoria regime culminating in the violence which we have all helplessly witnessed in recent months. The international community - all too familiar with those abominable methods - must maintain sanctions in order to accelerate the process of eliminating apartheid. Thus, Burkina Faso supports the continuation of negotiations in South Africa with a view to adopting the provisional measures necessary to create a totally democratic South Africa. In this spirit, together with the Non-Aligned Movement, we support the idea of a democratically elected constituent assembly.

In West Africa, in the case of Liberia, the Yamoussokro Summit of

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16 September is just one more effort undertaken by the Committee of Mediation and the Committee of Five, strongly supported by Burkina Faso within the framework of the implementation of the peace plan put forward by the Economic Community of West African States, to restore peace and to hold free and fair elections.

In Western Sahara, for the long process which began after the Spanish disengagement to succeed, we invite all parties to cooperate with the United Nations in order to hold a self-determination referendum after they have accepted the cease-fire of 6 September.

In the horn of Africa, tireless efforts must be continued and encouraged to bring about peace and stability in Somalia. Neighbouring Ethiopia has embarked upon a process of reconciliation and transition whose objective is the establishment of a lasting peace in democracy and justice.

In Rwanda, we hope that the efforts begun by the subregion and by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to bring about a negotiated and peaceful settlement will be successful.

In Central America, the conflicts which were of concern to us at previous sessions have been eased or solved. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General in El Salvador. We also welcome efforts undertaken in the region to make of it a zone of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

In Asia, the most recent developments in Cambodia are encouraging and positive and we urge all the parties to continue along this path in order to bring about a rapid, negotiated and peaceful settlement.

Similarly, we support the initiatives of the Secretary-General to bring about an overall political settlement in Afghanistan.

We also support the peaceful and independent reunification of North and

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South Korea on the basis of their joint communiqué of 4 July 1972. Once again, we bid them welcome here.

Kuwait has been liberated. At the time, we all condemned the invasion and we welcome the return of the Kuwaiti authorities and the restoration to the Kuwaiti people of its rights and prerogatives.

The sufferings they endured have left a very deep mark on the region and the work of reconciliation should be persistent and sustained. War is always horrible. Its ravages make no distinction between victims and aggressors. The first victims are always women and children. The conflict in the Gulf was no exception. It occurred at a time when East-West confrontation was fading and international relationships were being re-defined. Its beginning, development and conclusion, at both the military and political levels, has clearly changed the structure of international relations. The notion of a new world order had been mentioned long before 2 August 1990. However, at this time what do we know of its shape and its content? Have the Security Council and the United Nations - mobilized as never before - really lived up to the expectations of the international community? If so, are we entitled to expect the same determination, the same effectiveness, the same zeal in solving present or future problems? Will the new world order be based on the universal message of the Charter or on the harsh and selective realities of the international balance of forces? In the circumstances, what is to be the role of the have-nots - the immense multitude of people who are suffering from hunger, thirst, ignorance and disease? In a word, are these unfortunates to remain outside or are they to enter our family house so that we can all sit down together as brothers, to share and to grow together?

If there is one part of the world which is troubled, if there is one

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region of the world which is torn apart, it is the Middle East which enjoys this doubtful privilege.

The questions which are still being asked when we examine the Palestinian question are: How can those who have suffered from the lack of a homeland in all conscience deny others the right to a homeland? How, today, can it be possible to confiscate from people land on which they have lived uninterruptedly for centuries to give it to new arrivals and to claim that the former are not really in their rightful homes? How can one want for oneself what one does not want for others? The United Nations Charter contains principles which repudiate this mode of thought and conduct.

That is why the United Nations has adopted the principle of an international peace conference for the Middle East, not to complicate matters but rather to lay down the foundations of a just and lasting peace. We cannot stifle the voice of a people fighting for its rights and if Burkina Faso today associates itself with other Members of the United Nations in bidding a warm welcome to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, it is because a hiatus of 51 years has done nothing to dampen their national ardour or to erode the reality of their rights. And the same can be said for the fierce determination of the Palestinian people. Burkina Faso believes that the concessions made by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) three years ago deserve a response other than that of intransigence and rejection. We see that initiatives are under way to resolve the Middle East situation and we encourage them because they may lead to a just, lasting and fair peace which would take account of the fundamental rights of all parties.

Lebanon itself is emerging from a long and troubled period and we welcome these positive developments with a view to national reconciliation and the restoration of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

(Mr. Konate, Burkina Faso)

A tragedy is unfolding in Yugoslavia, where a civil war has begun. We can only deplore this tragedy, which has affected the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries as a symbol and in its European region. Non-alignment was a repudiation of the East-West confrontation and its consequences. This confrontation is yielding to ever more open cooperation. Yugoslavia, a pioneer country, has been stricken at the moment of rapprochement.

Between fusion and fission, Europe is moving towards economic integration and a redrawing of political lines. The essence of this lies in the will of the peoples, while survival depends upon the solidarity of people and on an international system based on justice and equity. That system should be based on human rights and political pluralism.

The 9 million citizens of my country belong to the multitude of the South. The aspirations of North and South are the same: dignity and security. Human rights are indivisible and to strive for them is the most noble and fruitful thing one can do for humanity, because, beyond talk and manipulation, there is the clear and concrete affirmation that it is indeed the human person that is most important.

When the international community rose up against apartheid, it was defending human rights. When the Non-Aligned Movement fought colonialism, it was defending human rights. When certain nations were colonizing territories during the last century, they were claiming to put into practice a certain idea of human rights: their "civilizing mission". When certain regions of the world are accused of corruption and the flagrant violation of the rights of the individual, very often those in the South who are corrupted have their counterparts and corrupters in the North, and sometimes vice versa, for such is the balance of the world.

(Mr. Konate, Burkina Faso)

If the world is changing, it must change for the better. The risk we all run is that of seeing a re-emergence of dangerous behaviour in the guise of innocent or consensual ideas. We must not allow the "civilizing mission" and human rights to be two sides of the same coin. In other words, the same protagonists must not be allowed in different costumes to act as they did in the past, forcing their way in all good conscience into our societies, which are no better or worse than their own but simply more vulnerable. Yesterday, encroachment took place in the guise of the civilizing mission. Today, we must fear encroachment on the pretext of human rights.

No one is against human rights, for they are inherent in humanity itself. To entertain only one partial and fragmentary vision of human rights is tantamount to condemning humanity to exploitation and deprivation. The right to development, to food, to a roof over one's head, to basic health care and to education are all parts of human rights as well. Supporting this without recognizing and accepting the fundamental nature of the rights of the individual would obviously be an imperfect way of defining and solving the problem. Similarly, to stress the rights of the individual while confining oneself solely to defending them is to refuse to see the world as it is today.

All that follows flows from what preceded it. Political pluralism is one form of democracy. Democracy can be political pluralism, but more is needed. That something more is the basis of democracy and overlaps with the rights I have just mentioned. A structurally unfavourable economic environment and a bad economic and social domestic situation are not the soil in which democracy flourishes. Burkina Faso believes that it is axiomatic today that the marriage between democracy and development is indissoluble, linked as these two elements are through permanent interaction. Unfortunately, however obvious it may be, this axiom has not produced its logical consequences.

(Mr. Konate, Burkina Faso)

Thus, the deterioration of the economic situation of Africa, together with its growing marginalization, has condemned 500 million people to stagnation, regression and continuing impoverishment. The 1980s were a lost decade in which the number of least developed countries increased from 28 to 42, the highest proportion of which were African.

Africa's external debt is an extremely heavy burden. This debt has increased to the present level of $270 billion. Debt servicing in Africa itself represents on the average more than 25 per cent of export earnings. In some countries of the continent, 100 per cent of export earnings are spent in this way. We should note that 85 to 95 per cent of African exports are primary commodities whose prices is constantly on the decline.

In 1986, the United Nations adopted a Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Five years later, in spite of policies pursued and reforms undertaken by African countries despite their social and political costs, the industrialized countries have not made the contribution they promised. The consensus at the time described the African economic crisis as essentially structural, requiring for its solution a long-term process undertaken by both the African and the donor countries. The developed countries and international financial institutions were supposed to make a greater contribution not only in terms of an increase in financial flows but also in the terms and conditions of this assistance. But they have not done so. To continue on this path is to condemn Africa to a decade even worse than the 1980s.

In this regard, we support the proposal of the Secretary-General to convene an international conference on the financing of development. The Economic and Social Council has followed up on this proposal and invited the General Assembly to examine it at its current session.

(Mr. Konate, Burkina Faso)

Similarly, we welcome the decision of the Japanese Government to organize an international conference in 1993 on development in Africa with the participation of African heads of State. For our part, the signing of the Treaty establishing the Pan-African Economic Community reflects our wish to bring about economic integration in order to meet current and future challenges.

Burkina Faso has always stressed and continues to stress the importance of international cooperation based on justice and solidarity. Whether that cooperation is South-South or North-South, its goal must be to obtain balanced economic growth and development for all. That goal will not be achieved if there is no adequate support for development strategies and if we continue to see such protectionist practices on the part of the North as the Uruguay Round.

It therefore seems to us that it is of the utmost importance to reconcile human rights and the right to development in a period as crucial as that of the transition towards democracy. Upon this depends the success of the whole process under way in our countries. In this regard, on 2 June 1991, the people of Burkina Faso adopted by referendum a constitution which now governs the life of the nation. The process begun will be continued until the establishment of new institutions following pluralistic and free elections on 1 December 1991 for the presidency and on 12 January 1992 for the legislative assembly.*

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Konate, Burkina Faso)

With regard to the environment, on the eve of the Brazil 1992 Conference, no one any longer questions the reality and gravity of the threat hanging over our planet because of the deterioration of our environment. We all know, developed and developing countries alike, that the developed countries by far bear the greatest responsibilities in the process of degradation. The series of preparatory meetings which have gone on since the adoption of resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989, on the convening of the Rio de Janeiro Conference, demonstrates the awareness of the States and regions of the world.

Measures have now been taken locally by certain countries on the basis of the recommendations stemming from those preparatory meetings. That is the case with my own country, Burkina Faso. However, the more we think about it, it is becoming clear that the restoration and preservation of the environment is a long-term task, not to say a permanent task, and that will require enormous human, material, technological and financial resources which, for the most part, are beyond the range of our weak economies. Only joint action by North and South can succeed in meeting the task.

Before concluding I should like to reassert the conviction of Burkina Faso that most of the problems of our world can be solved only by dialogue and negotiation between developed and developing countries with a view to bringing about specific solutions through a multilateral approach to these problems.

The United Nations today numbers 166 Members which have ratified the Charter. The ideals of 1945 are still applicable today, although the world has changed a great deal. It is time to take another look not only at the goals but also at the kind of response that the Organization can give to the questions of the day and to its own functioning. For our part we should like

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to see an Organization that is ever more efficient and involved for the greatest good of the greatest number. Never has mankind been so great and also so vulnerable; the world is experiencing both abundance and total destitution. It is time for our Organization to bring to fruition all its patient and laborious work for the prosperity of mankind, for peace, security and a more just and more humane order.

ADDRESS BY MR. JAMES BRENDAN BOLGER, PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Mr. James Brendan Bolger, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Right Honourable James Brendan Bolger, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. BOLGER (New Zealand): Mr. President, on behalf of the Government and the people of New Zealand let me first congratulate you on your election. It has certainly been a momentous year both for you and for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

I should like also to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who has worked tirelessly over the past 10 years towards the reduction of tension throughout the world. As he comes to the end of a decade of service I offer to the Secretary-General my congratulations, and those of the Government and the people of New Zealand on his personal contribution to the cause of peace.

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

I am delighted to join you, Sir, in welcoming new Members to this forty-sixth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. In particular I want to welcome the Federated States of Micronesia - a new member of this body, but a familiar friend to my country as host of the most recent meeting of South Pacific Forum nations. I am delighted that they and their close neighbours, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, are joining us at this time.

It is a source of immense satisfaction that we see here today for the first time the legitimate representatives of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. I pay tribute to the courage and determination of these three European nations that have struggled against totalitarian rule for so long. Their international recognition as independent sovereign States brings to an end a chapter in their history when they were forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940.

Their independence and membership of this Organization coupled with the membership of the Republic of Korea, which I warmly welcome, and the membership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea signal the end of an era, or more importantly the beginning of a new era, in international relations.

New opportunities in politics and trade command our attention. New problems constantly challenge our capabilities. In Yugoslavia, we see a situation that cries out for peaceful resolution. Mediation has been tried. It must be tried again. It will never be successful unless and until the parties to the conflict are prepared to commit themselves fully to the process. So my Government appeals to all other members of the international community that might have some influence - direct or indirect - to use that

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

influence to persuade the parties to the conflict to commit themselves to mediation if they cannot resolve their differences peacefully on their own.

Today the problems may look intractable but difficult issues can be solved. Already the change in global politics has been rewarded by significant progress in the field of disarmament. The super-Powers have committed themselves to substantial reductions in their arsenals of nuclear weapons. While the world warmly welcomes each new step in the reduction of nuclear weapons agreed to by the super-Powers, this progress is undermined by the actual or potential proliferation of nuclear weapons to other nations. Therefore on arms control nothing is more important than moves to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

New Zealand, as one of the first nations to sign and ratify the United Nations Non-Proliferation Treaty, firmly believes that attempts to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons must be an agenda item of the highest priority for the Organization. The dangers from nuclear weapons are such that a failure to halt their proliferation would seriously diminish the recent success in strategic arms reductions.

We welcome the decisions of France and the People's Republic of China to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Now that the Treaty will cover all the current nuclear Powers of the world, New Zealand urges all parties to agree to its indefinite extension in 1995.

In singling out nuclear weapons for particular attention, I do not in any way diminish the work needed to control other weapons of mass destruction, such as those using chemical or biological agents.

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

The importance of the task of stopping the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction should be firmly embedded in the minds of thinking people everywhere following the fearful possibility that Saddam Hussein would use such weapons during his illegal take-over of the State of Kuwait. That act of aggression tested the strength and commitment of this world body.

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

We can all take pride in the fact that the leadership shown by the United Nations in the exercise of its undoubted moral authority was successful in facilitating the coming together of a great coalition of nations who were determined that the might of Saddam Hussein would not succeed and that Kuwait would be restored to its independent sovereign status. During the dangerous weeks of the Gulf crisis the United Nations, with strong leadership from the Security Council, showed firmness of judgement and a commitment to the ideals of the United Nations that has reinforced the status and authority of this Organization. The Security Council was able to reflect accurately the mood of the General Assembly because of its broad representation across regional lines and its inclusion of the small and vulnerable as well as the large and powerful.

I want to pay a warm tribute to Kuwait's Arab neighbours, who were resolute in their support of the rights of a small independent nation and refused to back down to intimidation or threats. Their steadfastness in the early stages of the crisis was a major reason why Kuwait was eventually liberated.

The role of the United States in bringing together the coalition of nations who worked in concert to liberate Kuwait was an impressive display of international diplomacy. United States forces, with their British, French and Arab counterparts, gave an equally impressive display on the ground and in the air. But overriding the achievements of the individual nations was the commitment given by nations, large and small, to the military task force that gathered to halt aggression and to guarantee the independent sovereign rights of the small nation, Kuwait. I am proud that my country played a small part

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

in that coalition and has been able to contribute to the post-war United Nations commissions, such as that on the disposal of weapons of mass destruction.

As a small country in the south-west Pacific, we do not threaten anyone, nor do we seek to impose our will on other countries. But in joining the coalition we honoured a New Zealand tradition to oppose tyranny and support freedom. Luckier than a number, all our military personnel came home safely on this occasion, but many of their forebears in pursuit of the same goals rest alongside the battlefields of the modern world. We have never shirked our responsibilities.

As we opposed a dictator in the Gulf, freedom-loving people around the world have rejoiced as we have witnessed, too, the collapse of totalitarian communism in Europe. That system was defeated not by force of arms but by ordinary people, in their hundreds of thousands, marching in the streets to reclaim their God-given right to freedom of thought, expression and assembly and their right to democratic government. It has been a glorious victory for the indomitable spirit of the human person.

But let me sound a note of warning: this impressive victory could turn to bitterness, and hope to despair, unless all nations show equal courage in addressing an equally unprecedented economic challenge. The helping hand that both the emerging democracies of Europe and the developing countries of the world need most is the hand of trade. So, today, the barricades we must pull down are not those erected to prevent tanks but those erected to hinder trade.

To maintain and secure the dramatic political changes that have occurred, to deny dictators the excuse for coveting others' territory, to ease the

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

crushing debt burdens that too many countries face, to provide an economic alternative to the destruction of our environment - to do all these things, and more, we have to realize that a change in the international trading system is essential. Without change, how can the new democracies in Europe do what they want to do for their people if their exports face restrictions in foreign markets? How can debt-ridden developing nations ever pay their way if they face not only similar restrictions but subsidized competition too?

This is not a debate that can be drawn wholly across North-South lines, because trade restrictions occur on both sides, as does subsidization. This is a debate about giving meaning to the many fine words, about helping those who are struggling to escape poverty, and about securing the democratic freedoms so recently won. This is a debate about complementing aid with trade.

The Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations began nearly five years ago. It was, and remains, the most ambitious of all the trade negotiating rounds. Yet it is in real danger of faltering if the political commitments that were given in 1986, and have been repeated since then - most recently at the G-7 meeting this year - are not translated into the substantive decisions that are already overdue.

A country like mine, dependent on trade for its very livelihood, finds it incredible that political and economic leaders who are responsible in so many things, who are participating in, and encouraging, the dawn of a new political era, have not yet broken the log-jam in the negotiations. Certainly the G-7 group of industrialized countries, under the chairmanship of the British Prime Minister, gave us cause for new hope. Certainly the United States has been, and remains, a strong proponent of a liberalized international trading

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

system. Thoughtful leaders in the European Community, and many leaders in the developing world, have all called for greater progress.

But it seems to be a case of words, words and more words, but little action. If we are to succeed, action must now take the place of words. Time is running out. The alternative to a successful and substantive conclusion to the Uruguay Round is often said to be a series of trade blocs - groups of countries turning in on themselves, failing to realize their full competitive advantage; surviving, perhaps, but at a lower and more unstable level than would be possible in a liberal world trading system.

All this is quite possible, but I suggest that it is not the worst-case scenario. The worst-case scenario is those countries that have found new freedoms having those freedoms taken away by regimes who use the excuse of the need for economic control of disintegrating economies as a cover for political oppression; it is having stable countries being made less stable because they cannot earn the foreign exchange necessary to provide for the legitimate aspirations of their people; it is turning the clock back rather than forward.

With a view to avoiding that - and avoid it we must - I make a plea from this rostrum that the barricades that prevent fair trade be taken down. And if the powerful will not do it to help the weak, then they should do it for the selfish reason that it is the only way the world will secure a lasting peace. Trade between nations is what breaks down fear, and the sharing of resources by trade is what prevents wars of acquisition. If the selfish win, if the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade fails, then today's leaders will have planted the seed of future conflicts. That is a strong message, but it is no more so than the seriousness of the situation warrants.*

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* Mr. Al-Khussaiby (Oman), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Bolger, New Zealand)

Let us achieve a milestone in the progress of international trade this year, so that we can move forward with confidence to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development next year. A free and fair trade system is central to our efforts to conserve and enhance the environment. We have already made progress on issues such as driftnet fishing and with the Montreal Ozone Protocol; but we need to maximize these gains by ensuring that States fully observe the measures that have been adopted in such fields. Next year's United Nations Conference in Brazil will be the real test of our ability to cooperate in the endeavour to find the proper balance between development and environmental protection. My country is the first anywhere to enshrine the concept of sustainable development in legislation on natural resources.

Just before I departed from New Zealand seven students from seven continents of the world lit a candle for peace in front of Maori tukutuku panels symbolizing the seeking of knowledge. They were greeting the dawning of this new session of the United Nations General Assembly. The students participated in this ceremony in New Zealand because ours is one of the first countries to see the sun rise, and a ceremony at dawn is the traditional Maori way to acknowledge a new beginning.

We in this Assembly can all rejoice in that we are seeing new beginnings in many parts of the world: in Europe, in Cambodia, in South Africa. We must not let this moment in history pass; we must now replace an understanding of how to destroy each other with a new understanding of how to live and trade with each other. It is my most fervent hope and prayer that this great assembly of nations has the moral courage to do not only what is necessary but what is right.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of New Zealand for the statement he has just made.

Mr. James Brendan Bolger, Prime Minister of New Zealand, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting was suspended at 12.25 p.m. and resumed at 12.40 p.m.*

ADDRESS BY MR. GEORGE BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the United States of America.

Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. George Bush, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President BUSH: I am honoured to speak with you as you open the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I should first like to congratulate the outgoing President, Guido de Marco of Malta, and salute our incoming President, Samir Al-Shihabi of Saudi Arabia.

I also want to salute especially Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who will step down in just over three months. But let me say, Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar has served with great distinction during a period of unprecedented change and turmoil, and for almost 10 years we have enjoyed the leadership of this man of peace, a man that I, along with many Members, feel proud to call friend, and so today let us congratulate our friend and praise his spectacular service to the United Nations and to the people of the world, the Secretary-General.

Let me also welcome new Members in this Hall, two delegations representing Korea, particularly our democratic friends, the Republic of Korea, the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and new missions from the Marshall Islands and Micronesia.

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* The President resumed the Chair.

(President Bush)

Twenty years ago, when I was the Permanent Representative here for the United States, there were 132 United Nations Members. Just one week ago, 159 nations enjoyed membership in the United Nations, and today the number stands at 166. The presence of these new Members alone provides reason for us to celebrate.

My statement today will not sound like any you have heard from a President of the United States. I am not going to dwell on the super-Power competition that defined international politics for half a century. Instead, I will discuss the challenges of building peace and prosperity in a world leavened by the cold war's end and the resumption of history.

Communism held history captive for years. It suspended ancient disputes; and it suppressed ethnic rivalries, nationalist aspirations and old prejudices. As it has dissolved, suspended hatreds have sprung to life. People who for years have been denied their pasts, have begun searching for their own identities, often through peaceful and constructive means, occasionally through factionalism and bloodshed.

This revival of history ushers in a new era teeming with opportunities and perils. Let us begin by discussing the opportunities. First, history's renewal enables people to pursue their natural instincts for enterprise. Communism froze that progress until its failures became too much for even its defenders to bear, and now citizens throughout the world have chosen enterprise over envy, personal responsibility over the enticements of the State, prosperity over the poverty of central planning.

The United Nations Charter encourages this adventure by pledging to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples, and I can think of no better way to fulfil this

(President Bush)

mission than to promote the free flow of goods and ideas. Frankly, ideas and goods will travel around the globe with or without our help. The information revolution has destroyed the weapons of enforced isolation and ignorance. In many parts of the world technology has overwhelmed tyranny, proving that the age of information can become the age of liberation, if we limit State power wisely and free our people to make the best use of new ideas, inventions and insights. By the same token, the world has learned that free markets provide levels of prosperity, growth and happiness that centrally planned economies can never offer.

Even the most charitable estimates indicate that in recent years the free world's economies have grown at twice the rate of the former communist world. Growth does more than fill shelves; it permits every person to gain, not at the expense of others but to the benefit of others. Prosperity encourages people to live as neighbours, not as predators. Economic growth can aid international relations in exactly the same way.

(President Bush)

Many nations represented here are parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The Uruguay Round, the latest in the post-war series of trade negotiations, offers hope to developing nations, many of which have been cruelly divided, cruelly deceived, by the false promises of totalitarianism. Here in this Hall, we hear about North-South problems. But free and open trade, including unfettered access to markets and credit, offers developing countries means of self-sufficiency and economic dignity.

If the Uruguay Round should fail, a new wave of protectionism could destroy our hopes for a better future. History shows all too clearly that protectionism can destroy wealth within countries and poison relations between them. Therefore, I call upon all members of GATT to redouble their efforts to reach a successful conclusion for the Uruguay Round. I pledge that the United States will do its part.

I cannot stress this enough: Economic progress will play a vital role in the new world. It supplies the soil in which democracy grows best. People everywhere seek government of and by the people, and they want to enjoy their inalienable rights to freedom and property and person. Challenges to democracy have failed. Just last month, coup plotters in the Soviet Union tried to derail the forces of liberty and reform, but Soviet citizens refused to follow. Most of the nations in this Hall stood with the forces of reform led by Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, and against the coup plotters.

The challenge facing the Soviet peoples now, that of building political systems based upon individual liberty, minority rights, democracy and free markets, mirrors every nation's responsibility for encouraging peaceful, democratic reform, but it also testifies to the extraordinary power of the

(President Bush)

democratic ideal. As democracy flourishes, so does the opportunity for a third historical breakthrough, international cooperation. A year ago, the Soviet Union joined the United States and a host of other nations in defending a tiny country against aggression and opposing Saddam Hussein. For the very first time on a matter of major importance super-Power competition was replaced with international cooperation. The United Nations, in one of its finest moments, constructed a measured, principled, deliberate and courageous response to Saddam Hussein. It stood up to an outlaw who invaded Kuwait, who threatened many States within the region, who sought to set a menacing precedent for the post-cold-war world.

The coalition effort established a model for the collective settlement of disputes. Members set the goal - the liberation of Kuwait - and devised a courageous, unified means of achieving that goal. Now, for the first time, we have a real chance to fulfil the United Nations Charter's ambition of working

> "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small ... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

Those are the words of the Charter.

We will not revive these ideals if we fail to acknowledge the challenge that the renewal of history presents. In Europe and Asia, nationalist passions have flared anew, challenging borders, straining the fabric of international society. At the same time, around the world many age-old conflicts still fester. We see signs of this tumult right here. The United Nations has mounted more peace-keeping missions in the last 36 months than

(President Bush)

during its first 43 years, and although we now seem mercifully liberated from the fear of nuclear holocaust, these smaller, virulent conflicts should trouble us all.

We must face this challenge squarely - first, by pursuing the peaceful resolution of disputes now in progress; secondly, and more importantly, by trying to prevent others from erupting. No one here can promise that today's borders will remain fixed for all time, but we must strive to ensure the peaceful, negotiated settlement of border disputes.

We also must promote the cause of international harmony by addressing old feuds. We should take seriously the Charter's pledge to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours. United Nations General Assembly resolution 3379 (XXX), the so-called "Zionism is racism" resolution, mocks this pledge and the principles upon which the United Nations was founded, and I call now for its repeal. Zionism is not a policy; it is the idea that led to the creation of a home for the Jewish people, to the State of Israel, and to equate Zionism with the intolerable sin of racism is to twist history and forget the terrible plight of Jews in the Second World War - and indeed throughout history. To equate Zionism with racism is to reject Israel itself, a Member in good standing of the United Nations. This body cannot claim to seek peace and at the same time challenge Israel's right to exist. By repealing this resolution unconditionally the United Nations will enhance its credibility and serve the cause of peace.

As we work to meet the challenge posed by the resumption of history, we also must defend the Charter's emphasis on inalienable human rights. Government has failed if citizens cannot speak their mind, if they cannot

(President Bush)

form political parties freely and elect governments without coercion, if they cannot practice their religion freely, if they cannot raise their families in peace, if they cannot enjoy a just return from their labour, if they cannot live fruitful lives and at the end of their days look upon their achievements and their society's progress with pride. Politicians who talk about democracy and freedom but provide neither eventually will feel the sting of public disapproval and the power of peoples yearning to live free.

Some nations still deny their basic rights to the people, and too many voices cry out for freedom. For example, the people of Cuba suffer oppression at the hands of a dictator who has not got the word, the lone hold-out in an otherwise democratic hemisphere, a man who has not adapted to a world that has no use for totalitarian tyranny. Elsewhere, despots ignore the heartening fact that the rest of the world is embarked upon a new age of liberty.

The renewal of history also imposes an obligation to remain vigilant about new threats and old. We must expand our efforts to control nuclear proliferation. We must work to prevent the spread of chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them.

(President Bush)

It is for this reason that I put forward my Middle East arms initiative, a comprehensive approach to stop and, where possible, reverse the accumulation of arms in that part of the world most prone to violence. We must remember that self-interest will tug nations in different directions, and that struggles over perceived interests will flare sometimes into violence. We can never say with confidence where the next conflict may arise. And we cannot promise eternal peace - not while demagogues peddle false promises to people hungry with hope; not while terrorists use our citizens as pawns and drug dealers destroy our peoples. We, as a result, must band together to overwhelm affronts to basic human dignity. It is no longer acceptable to shrug and say that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. Let us put the law above the crude and cowardly practice of hostage-holding.

In a world defined by change, we must be as firm in principle as we are flexible in our response to changing international conditions. That is especially true today of Iraq. Six months after the adoption of Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 688 (1991), Saddam continues to rebuild his weapons of mass destruction and to subject the Iraqi people to brutal repression. Saddam's contempt for United Nations resolutions was first demonstrated back in August 1990, and it continues even as I am speaking. His Government refuses to permit unconditional helicopter inspections, and right now is refusing to allow United Nations inspectors to leave inspected premises with documents relating to an Iraqi nuclear weapons programme. It is the view of the United States that we must keep the United Nations sanctions in place as long as he remains in power. This also shows that we cannot compromise for a moment in seeing that Iraq destroys all of its weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. And we will not compromise.

(President Bush)

This is not to say - let me be clear on this point - that we should punish the Iraqi people. Let me repeat: our argument has never been with the people of Iraq. It was, and is, with a brutal dictator whose arrogance dishonours the Iraqi people. Security Council resolution 706 (1991) created a responsible mechanism for sending humanitarian relief to innocent Iraqi citizens. We must put that mechanism to work. We must not abandon our principled stand against Saddam's aggression. This cooperative effort has liberated Kuwait. Now it can lead to a just government in Iraq. And when it does - when it does - the Iraqi people can look forward to better lives, free at home, free to engage in a world beyond their borders.

The resumption of history also permits the United Nations to resume the important business of promoting the values that I have discussed today. This body can serve as a vehicle through which willing parties can settle old disputes. In the months to come, I look forward to working with Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar and his successor as we pursue peace in such diverse and troubled lands as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cyprus, El Salvador and Western Sahara. The United Nations can encourage free market development through its international lending and aid institutions. However, it should not dictate the particular forms of government that nations should adopt. It can, and should, encourage the values upon which the Organization was founded. Together, we should insist that nations seeking our acceptance meet standards of human decency.

Where institutions of freedom have lain dormant, the United Nations can offer them new life. These institutions play a crucial role in our quest for a new world order, an order in which no nation must surrender one iota of its own sovereignty, an order characterized by the rule of law rather than the

(President Bush)

resort to force, the cooperative development of disputes rather than anarchy and bloodshed, and an unstinting belief in human rights.

Finally, you may wonder about America's role in the new world I have described. Let me assure you, the United States has no intention of striving for a pax americana. However, we will remain engaged. We will not retreat and pull back into isolationism. We will offer friendship and leadership. In short, we seek a pax universalis, built upon shared responsibilities and aspirations.

To all assembled: We have an opportunity to spare our sons and daughters the sins and errors of the past. We can build a future more satisfying than any our world has ever known. The future lies undefined before us, full of promise, littered with peril. We can choose the kind of world we want: one blistered by the fires of war and subjected to the winds of coercion and chance, or one made more peaceful by reflection and choice. Take this challenge seriously. Inspire future generations to praise and venerate you, to say, "On the ruins of conflict, these brave men and women built an era of peace and understanding. They inaugurated a new world order, an order worth preserving for the ages."

Good luck to each and every one of you.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the statement he has just made.

Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.